Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 04956 311808Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----------311813Z 008491 /47
P 311737Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1784

S E C R E T BOGOTA 4956

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS ASEC CASC CO
SUBJ: STARR KIDNAPPING: FALSE PRESS REPORTS

REF: STATE 112867, BOGOTA 4780

1. PRESS OFFICER HAS DISCUSSED FALSE REPORTS OF STARR RELEASE WITH LOCAL REPORTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR WRITTEN VERSION. EL VESPERTINO REPORTER, HERMAN UNAS, WHO INITIALLY CLAIMED HE HAD CONFIRMED STORY WITH AN OFFICIAL SOURCE, STILL MAINTAINS HE DID SO AND THAT SEVERAL OTHER REPORTERS CONFIRMED STORY THROUGH SAME SOURCE. HE REFUSES TO REVEAL SOURCE OR SAY WHETHER SOURCE LOCATED IN BOGOTA OR MACARENA AREA. NOR IS HE ABLE TO EXPLAIN HOW SOURCE, WHO HE CLAIMS IS "HIGH LEVEL" AND "RESPONSIBLE" MADE ERROR. IN OUR JUDGMENT HIS RETICENCE IS ATTRIBUTABLE MAINLY TO EMBARRASSMENT OVER PROFESSIONAL GOOF.

2. REPORTERS BELIEVE THE FALSE REPORT ORIGINATED FROM STORIES PASSED AROUND BY FARMERS IN THE HUILA REGION; IT WAS THEN PICKED UP BY FARMERS IN THE NEIGHBORING MACARENA AREA AND TOLD BY THEM TO THE LOCAL POLICE. TWO SMALL RADIO STATIONS IN THE MACARENA AREA THEN PRICKED UP STORY FROM LOCAL POLICE, AND NEESPAPERS TOOK STORY FROM THE RADIO REPORT.

3. THE ONLY PUBLISHED INTERPRETATION WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO FIND
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ON HOW THE STORY WAS PROPAGATED APPEARED IN THE BOGOTA AFTERNOON TABLOID EL ESPACIO APRIL 27. THIS ACCOUNT REFERS TO THE FARMERS' RUMOUR ROUTE, THE STORY SAID TO HAVE TAKEN SOME TWENTY DAYS TO REACH THE MACARENA AREA FROM HUILA. ON THE HEELS OF THE EARLIER REPORT THAT STARR HAD BEEN LIBERATED, SAID ESPACIO, FOLLOWED AN EXPLANATORY STORY THAT A DOWN-AND-OUT PERSON, TAKING ADVANTAGE OF HIS PHYSICAL RESEMBLANCE TO STARR HAD SUCCEEDED

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IN PASSING HIMSELF OFF AS THE KIDNAPPED AMERICAN FOR A FREE RIDE
TO NEIVA AND A GIFT OF SOME CASH. THE STORY ENDS THERE, WITH THE
IMPOSTER APPARENTLY DROPPING OUT OF SIGHT. OTHER PAPERS CONCLUDED
THE STORY WITH STATEMENTS THAT THEY HAD BEEN UNABLE TO OBTAIN ANY
OFFICIAL COLOMBIAN OR US SOURCE TO CONFIRM STARR
LIBERATED.
DREXLER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, ALLEGATIONS, PRISONERS RELEASE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 31-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BOGOTA04956
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770193-0541
Format: TEL
From: BOGOTA
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977054/aaaaadaj.tel
Line Count: 69
Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
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Review Content Flags:
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Subject: STARR KIDNAPPING: FALSE PRESS REPORTS
TAGS: PINS, ASEC, CASC, SOPN, CO, (STARR, RICHARD CHARLES)
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Type: TE
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